What is claimed is:

1.      A method for distributing software code to particular end user terminals in a network, comprising:

transmitting a software image that includes a code section lookup table, a common code section for all terminals in the network, and specific code sections for different terminals in the network;

said specific code sections being provided for at least one of:

(i)  different terminal hardware configurations,

(ii)  different terminal device driver code,

(iii) different terminal models,

(iv) different terminal software features, and

(v)  different system protocols.

2.      A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said common and specific code sections together include all of the executable code necessary to enable a plurality of different end user terminals, coupled to said network, to provide services to respective end users.

3.      A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said software image is processed by said end user terminals to locate and extract common and specific code sections intended for the particular terminal.

4.      A method in accordance with claim 3, wherein the extracted common and specific code sections are stored in the terminal.

5.    A method in accordance with 4 wherein said code section lookup table comprises:

a first section containing information required to enable end user terminals to identify the specific code sections for the terminal;  and

a second section for enabling the end user terminals to locate the common and specific code sections within said software image for extraction and storage.

6.    A method in accordance with claim 5, wherein the user terminals:

locate and extract the common code sections using the second section of said code section lookup table; and

subsequently locate and extract the specific code sections using the first and second sections of the code section lookup table.

7.    A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said code section lookup table includes Board ID descriptions for identifying specific code sections based on different terminal hardware configurations.

8.    A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said code section lookup table includes Family ID descriptions for identifying specific code sections based on different terminal manufacturers.

9.    A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said code section lookup table includes Model ID descriptions for identifying specific code sections based on different terminal models.

10.    A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said code section lookup table includes Software ID descriptions for identifying specific code sections based on different terminal software features.

11.    A method in accordance with claim 10 wherein Software IDs are provided to said terminals via at least one of (i) end user input and (ii) a system message.

12.    A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said code section lookup table includes Protocol ID descriptions for identifying specific code sections based on different system protocols.

13.    A method in accordance with claim 12 wherein Protocol IDs are provided to said terminals from a headend.

14.    A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said code section lookup table includes an identifier for identifying specific code sections containing customized versions of application code objects to be distributed to particular ones of said end user terminals.

15.    Apparatus for distributing software code to particular end user terminals in a broadband network, comprising:
        a processor for providing a software image that includes a code section lookup table, a common code section for all terminals in the network, and specific code sections for different terminals in the network; and
        a transmitter for communicating the software image to said terminals;
        said specific code sections being provided for at least one of:
        (i) different terminal hardware configurations,

(ii) different terminal device driver code,

(iii) different terminal models,

(iv) different terminal software features, and

(v) different system protocols.

16. A user terminal for selectively receiving software code via a network, comprising:

a receiver adapted to receive a software image;

said software image including a code section lookup table, a common code section for a plurality of terminals in the network, and specific code sections for different terminals in the network;

a processor for locating and extracting common and specific code sections intended for said user terminal; and

memory for storing the extracted code sections.

17. A user terminal in accordance with claim 16, wherein specific code sections are provided for at least one of:

(i) the user terminal hardware configuration,

(ii) the user terminal device driver code,

(iii) the user terminal model,

(iv) user terminal software features, and

(v) network system protocols.

18. A user terminal in accordance with claim 16, wherein said common and specific code sections together include all of the executable code necessary for said user terminal to provide services to an end user.

19.    A user terminal in accordance with claim 16, wherein the terminal is a set-top box for use in a subscription television system.

20.    A user terminal in accordance with claim 16, wherein said code section lookup table comprises:

a first section containing information required to enable the user terminal to identify the specific code sections for the terminal;  and

a second section for enabling the user terminal to locate the common and specific code sections within said software image for extraction and storage.

21.    A user terminal in accordance with claim 16, wherein the user terminal:

locates and extracts the common code sections using the second section of said code section lookup table; and

subsequently locates and extracts the specific code sections using the first and second sections of the code section lookup table.

22.    A user terminal in accordance with claim 16, further comprising:

a user interface adapted to enable an end user to provide a Software ID for identifying a specific software feature to be located and extracted.